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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 000586

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/12/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [HR](#) [NATO](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA IN AFGHANISTAN: MAY UP CONTRIBUTION &  
REMOVE CAVEATS

REF: SECSTATE 60862

Classified By: Poloff Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

SUMMARY

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1. (C ) Rel UK) The GoC MFA NATO Coordinator Pjer Simunovic and MoD Director for International Defense Cooperation Davor Cutic responded on April 7 to reftel demarche that the GoC would reconsider caveats on Afghanistan ISAF deployments. The GoC is currently reviewing increasing its ISAF military deployment to up to 150 persons as well as increasing its civilian PRT contribution. Simunovic will lead a four-person team on a review tour of the GoC's civilian deployment to Feyzabad, Afghanistan April 21-27. End SUMMARY.

2. (C - Rel UK) Poloff & ADATT delivered reftel demarche separately to Croatian MFA National Coordinator for NATO Pjer Simunovic and Ministry of Defense Director for International Cooperation Davor Cutic on April 7. Cutic, otherwise well informed for his first week on the job, seemed not fully briefed on the scope of ISAF mandate, questioning whether the current mandate allowed deployments outside of Kabul. He was concerned that the Croatian caveats would be hard to change as they reflected President's clear policy of only sending troops outside of Croatia under a UN mandate. We followed up on April 8 with relevant UNSCR resolution excerpts to help set Cutic straight that the ISAF mandate covers deployments beyond Kabul.

3. (C - Rel UK) Nonetheless, Cutic understood the need for removing or reducing caveats and said he would look at changes as the MoD looks at expanding its ISAF deployment. Cutic said that the precise shape of the expanded deployment is under review and could be either a reinforced platoon of approximately 100 persons (including the current 50 person MP platoon) or a full company of 150. The new personnel would come from a NATO-declared infantry company who would be cross-trained in MP duties.

4. (C ) Rel UK) Assistant Minister of Defense Igor Pokaz repeated this formulation for an expanded ISAF contribution in an April 8 meeting with EUR/SCE Director Charles English. Pokaz added that a concept paper for Presidential approval was in preparation. Pokaz said that the Croatian Armed Forces were gaining invaluable experience in the Afghanistan and other UN PKO deployments and the MoD was looking at modalities for expanding its overseas deployments.

5. (C ) Rel UK) Simunovic responded that GoC would review the issue in the context of expanding the ISAF deployment, noting that the Sabor (Croatian parliament) approves only the number and type of troops deployed but does not set any specific restrictions on their use. Simunovic said that the caveats could be changed without too much difficulty as they were largely mission-specific and set by the MoD. He also commented that it was politically easier for the GoC to gain Sabor approval for expanding an existing military mission than to create a new one in a place like Iraq.

6. (C ) Rel UK) Simunovic said that he planned to travel with a four-man team to Kabul, Kunduz and Feyzabad April 21-27. The team will consist of Simunovic; Ivan Starcevic, the next diplomat to be assigned to the civilian PRT in Feyzabad; Marko Kricancic, the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Department for Peacekeeping Missions; and an MoD representative to be named. Simunovic said that he would also look at the possibility of increasing civilian contributions to Afghanistan PRTs.

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